

Dr. Burgess Weekly Address June 1, 2018

Fighting Childhood Cancer

Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

Each of us knows someone who has suffered from cancer – whether they are a cancer patient, or a family member, friend, or loved one. It is especially heart-wrenching to watch children go through a cancer diagnosis and treatment. Caring for children with cancer requires special care. Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Childhood Cancer STAR Act to offer hope to America's youngest cancer patients.

This bill builds on the work established by the 21st Century Cures Act, which invested in research to treat – and even cure – our most devastating diseases. The STAR Act focuses on increasing research for cancer in children, adolescents, and young adults. Specifically, the bill funds the National Childhood Cancer Registry, which will help doctors and researchers better understand cancer in children. It also establishes grants to help establish pilot programs to develop, study, and evaluate methods of care for childhood cancer patients. And, the STAR Act prioritizes greater efficiency and coordination of care for childhood cancer survivors as they transition into adulthood.

While the House was considering the STAR Act, I was thinking of patients like Sadie. Sadie was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia in February 2015, when she was just seven years old. This young North Texan fought through infections, blood transfusions, and rare side effects. She missed out on second and third grade as she underwent weekly chemotherapy.

Today it is my great joy to share that Sadie beat the odds and survived Leukemia – she received her last chemotherapy treatment on almost a year ago. Now at 11 years old, Sadie is able to live the life of a normal kid. I would like to thank Sadie and her family for their willingness to share their story, and for their advocacy in support of this important legislation.

When I met Sadie in my office last spring, I was inspired by her story. She has started a non-profit, the Sadie Keller Foundation, to raise money to help other kids who are facing cancer. Her mission is to “put a smile on the faces of children fighting cancer all over the country, and remind them to keep fighting.”

With the passage of the STAR Act, the House sent this critical legislation to President Trump's desk - helping Sadie achieve her mission of putting a smile on the faces of children fighting cancer.

This legislation is personal because it's for the children and parents who are building our nation's future. With its passage, I am glad that we could get this bipartisan bill across the finish line, delivering hope to these young patients and their families. We must keep fighting to end childhood cancer.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your questions on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, and as the song says God bless you Texas.